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ABSTRACT

This booklet helps coaches educate student athletes in middle, junior high, and high school about the dangers of drugs. Athletic coaches have a special relationship with athletes and other students but often underestimate their influence on them. When they talk to their players and students about the dangers of drugs, the message is more effective because it comes from the coach. Section 1 explains the relationship between coaches and students, noting why players use drugs and how drugs really affect athletes. Section 2 examines how coaches can keep their teams drug free, offering do's and don'ts as commonsense guidelines for handling situations they may encounter. Section 3 explains how coaches can get their message across, noting that the best defense is a good offense. Ten suggestions include encouraging participation in athletics, clearly expressing their expectations that players will not use drugs, emphasizing the benefits of sports participation, encouraging athletes to set personal goals, helping students develop appropriate decision making skills, and developing meaningful relationships with students. Section 4 discusses the effects of using drugs (e.g., it hampers performance; increases the risk of drug-related problems; impairs life skills development; damages physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development; affects the game; and makes team spirit suffer). Section 5 presents a student's and a coach's pledge to beat drugs. (SM)

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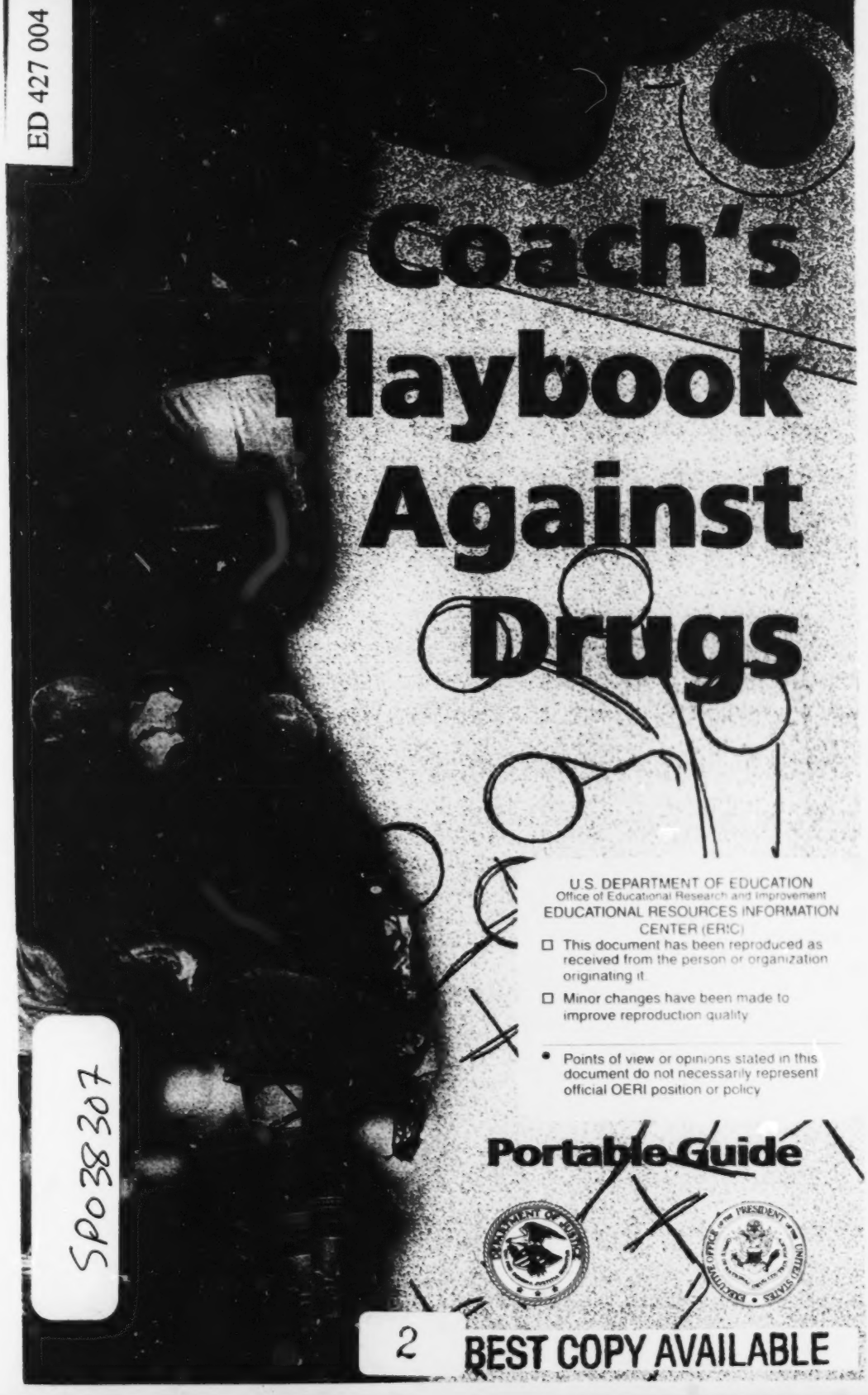
Coach's Playbook Against Drugs



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Portable Guide

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DO YOU KNOW THE SCORE—

ON YOUR SPECIAL ROLE?

The purpose of this playbook is to help you as a coach educate your athletes about the dangers of drugs. Each year, 7 million boys and girls in this Nation are involved in sports at middle schools, junior high schools, or high schools. These students are the catalysts for a healthy chain reaction of involvement and school spirit that includes team captains, players, other students, school personnel, and the community. And it all begins with you—the coach—as the pivotal player.

Athletic coaches have a special relationship with athletes and other students but often underestimate their influence on these young people. You are a role model in the eyes of a young athlete, and you occupy this leadership role at a very significant and impressionable time in the athlete's life. When you talk to your players and students about the dangers of drugs, the message is more effective because "Coach" is behind those words.

What you tell your athletes about the use of alcohol and other drugs is very important. Don't take the subject lightly—the lives and future of the young people you coach are truly at stake. Equally important, the standards that you set by example will become the guide for students' behavior. If you want athletes to stay away from alcohol and other drugs, you must send that message clearly

"Coaching your students to remain drug free is a championship play. Join our team."

Larry Bird
Coach—Indiana Pacers
Former Boston Celtic
1998 Basketball Hall of Fame Inductee
12-Time All Star
3-Time NBA MVP
2-Time NBA Finals MVP

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and forcefully, in words and in actions. If team members do not hear your opinion on this important subject, they may assume that you don't care. Many coaches may believe that their players are not the ones who are using alcohol and drugs, but they may be mistaken.

ON WHY PLAYERS USE DRUGS?

Coaches need to be aware of why athletes—perhaps even their own players—may be using alcohol and other drugs.

Athletes can be overwhelmed by pressure:

- Pressure to win.
- Pressure to perform well.
- Pressure to maintain a "cool" image.

Some athletes turn to drugs, including alcohol, to relieve stress and feel good. When athletes use alcohol or other drugs, they may achieve this goal by feeling an initial "high." Other times, players turn to drugs to sustain a good feeling. Coming off the field after a winning game, for example, athletes may try to prolong that winning feeling by turning to a mind-altering drug. On the other hand, if their team has lost the game, they may want to replace depressed feelings with a "high" from a mood-altering drug.

ON HOW DRUGS REALLY AFFECT ATHLETES?

As you know, using drugs will not relieve stress or allow a game high to last forever. By clearing up your players' misconceptions about the effects of drugs and explaining how drugs really affect our bodies, you may be able to keep your team drug free. In particular, explain that:

- Drugs may make players feel good initially, but that the good feelings are typically followed by unpleasant ones. Drugs

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don't solve problems; they create problems and make coping with them even harder. Drugs don't make stress go away; they create stress.

- Drugs will not enhance performance on the playing field. With the possible exception of one type of drug—anabolic steroids—it is simply not true that using drugs will enhance players' performance.
- Drugs actually interfere with an athlete's physical and mental ability. And, even though steroids may improve short-term performance, the physical side effects and emotional damage they cause far outweigh any gains.

YOU CAN KEEP YOUR TEAM DRUG FREE

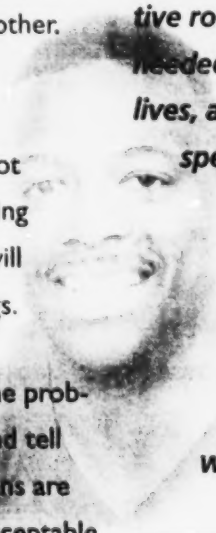
You are in a special position to prevent drug use. The "do's and don'ts" below are commonsense guidelines for handling situations that you or your fellow coaches are likely to encounter at one time or another.

Don't—

Pretend that you did not hear an athlete discussing plans for a party that will involve alcohol or drugs.

Do—

Immediately address the problem with the athlete and tell him or her that the plans are inappropriate and unacceptable



"It's important for coaches to take an active part in their players' lives—both on and off the field. Positive role models are needed in our children's lives, and coaches have a special opportunity to deliver a powerful and consistent message about the dangers of drugs."

Darrell Green
Defensive Back—
Washington Redskins #28
Six-Time Pro Bowler

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for any member of your team. Tell the athlete that you are concerned and that you care. Ask if he or she needs any help. Tell him or her that drug use weakens an athlete's body and increases the risk of motor vehicle and other accidents.

Don't—

Choose to ignore the smell of marijuana.

Do—

Confront the athlete immediately. Make sure that he or she knows that you know. If you fail to act, the athlete may assume that this behavior is OK or that you don't care. Explain that marijuana is illegal and that the athlete can be arrested or suspended from school and sports for using it.

Don't—

Avoid enforcing rules—or enforce them selectively.

Do—

Be firm, set limits, and stick to them. Be sure that the rules you set are helpful in changing an athlete's behavior. Don't alienate or stigmatize athletes; engage them in the rulemaking.

Don't—

Ignore drug use because the team "needs" a particular athlete to play.

Do—

Set rules and enforce them consistently. Once you look away, team morale will suffer, as will your moral leadership. By opting to look the other way, you also fail in your responsibility to the athlete. If he or she gets hurt, how will you feel? Emphasize that the same rules apply to all team members and that you, as a coach, have a responsibility to enforce rules consistently.

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Don't—

Ignore drug use by the coaching staff.

Do—

Ensure that everyone on your staff sets a good example. Your players will heed not just what you say, but what you do.

KEY PLAYS— HOW TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

The best defense is a good offense. If you want to follow through and keep drugs and alcohol off the playing field and out of your players' lives, here are 10 key plays to help you get your message across.

1. **Encourage participation in athletics** by making your **team an integral and exciting part** of school or **community life.** Spending large amounts of time unsupervised after school and on weekends greatly increases the odds that teenagers will experiment with drugs. Therefore, you should make a special effort to involve youth in constructive after-school activities, such as athletics. Equally important, however, is for teenagers to find these activities fun and rewarding. Try to provide opportunities for kids of all abilities to participate and have fun.

> ***"A soccer team needs players who are responsible and make good decisions. Taking drugs of any kind is not a good decision. As a coach, I have tremendous respect for those people who stand up to the pressure and won't tolerate drug use. We all need these kinds of people."***
>
> *Bob Bradley*
> *Head Coach—Chicago Five*

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2. **Clearly express your expectation that players will not use drugs.** Some adults, especially those who have used drugs themselves, find it difficult to talk to youth about drugs. Unless adults clearly state an expectation that youth should not use drugs, however, adolescents may not understand what standard, if any, they are being held to.

3. **Ensure that your players know the risks of drug use, especially those that affect athletic performance and their future.** Getting high has both long- and short-term consequences for an athlete—consequences that young people may not be aware of, but that you, the expert on performance, understand. For example, short-term risks of marijuana use include decreased stamina, weight gain, and reduced muscle strength. Steroids can lead to heart disease, infertility, and skin disease, and cause aggression in a person's daily life. Laziness, lack of motivation, loss of control, and poor decisionmaking are additional risks associated with drug use. Any of these can affect a player's long-term goals, like winning a championship or getting a college scholarship.

4. **Emphasize the benefits of participating in sports,** particularly benefits that young people care about, including:

   - Gaining the respect of peers.
   - Sharing new and exciting experiences with close friends.
   - Earning the respect and trust of parents and siblings.
   - Setting a good example for others (especially younger siblings).
   - Having a strong sense of self-worth and self-respect.

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- Increasing control over one's life and its direction.
- Achieving personal growth and progress toward one's goals.

The last three benefits are particularly important to high school students.

Psychologists have long made the case that the "carrot-and-stick" approach works far better than the "stick" alone. When you link the attainment of benefits that young people care most about to activities other than using drugs, you help them develop closely held reasons for staying drug free.

5. **Make sure your players know that drug use among preteens and early teens (ages 11 to 14) is a "fringe" behavior.** Eighty percent of eighth-grade students do not use drugs, yet most eighth graders believe drug use among their peers is common. This "myth" exerts a subtle and insidious form of peer pressure. Studies show that when the myth is debunked, preteens and early teens are less likely to try drugs.

"As a former player, I know the value of a good coach. As a coach, I know you can send the right message to kids about drugs. Coach your students away from drugs."

Mookie Wilson
First Base Coach—
New York Mets
Former Outfielder for the
1986 World Series
Champion New York Mets

6. **Encourage athletes to set personal goals and assist them in making progress toward those goals.** People who know how to regulate their behavior effectively are

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more likely to set and achieve goals. Studies show that adolescents who learn self-regulation skills are far less likely to use drugs (presumably because they become more involved in setting and pursuing larger goals).

All athletes can set goals for what they want to achieve throughout the season. Help them to do so, and assist them in tracking their progress. Let them know that you have noticed their accomplishments, and praise them to other team members and peers. This gives young people specific, measurable ways to gauge the benefits of spending time on athletics.

Skills shown to be helpful to teens in setting goals and measuring progress toward them include identifying appropriate goals, not only for the short term but also for the long term; recognizing situations and people that are a threat to accomplishing the goals; and thinking through the consequences of one's actions.

7. **Have older players reinforce the idea that real "cool" kids don't use drugs—they disapprove of them.** The vast majority of preteens and early teens disapprove of drug use, and even a majority of older teens disapprove. Yet, preteens and early teens routinely underestimate this disapproval; most believe that the majority of their peers approve of drug use. Heightening the perception of disapproval by peers and older teens is one of the most powerful ways to prevent drug use.

   A simple way to do this is to select a number of your older players who don't use drugs (including some likely to be considered "cool" by younger players) and have them meet as a group with your younger players. Encourage the older

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players to speak openly about the negative consequences of using drugs that they have observed—including effects on physical abilities and school performance. Most importantly, have these players talk about how using drugs lets other people—parents, teachers, friends, teammates—down. Remind your older players that they are role models. Encourage them to speak out, and reach out, to younger kids.

8. **Help young people to develop appropriate decisionmaking skills.** Adolescence is a time of life when teens must make an increasing number of decisions. Many adolescents, however, have not been taught how to make good decisions.

   To help your players develop decisionmaking skills, let them share in decisions that affect the team as a whole. For example, let players help decide on the structure of a practice or the specific skills to work on during a practice session. Guide athletes through the decisionmaking process by teaching them to (1) identify/clarify the decision to be made; (2) consider all possible options and outcomes; (3) choose the best option; and (4) follow through.

9. **Let players know that they can talk to you about their fears and concerns regarding drug use.** Most adolescents yearn for a close relationship with a caring adult and for the ability to communicate honestly. They may find it easier to talk to a coach than to their parents about sensitive topics such as sex and drugs. By responding openly when such a topic is raised, you will help your players learn new ways to broach sensitive subjects and keep important lines of communication open. Tell players where they can find more information and steer those who need help toward it. One place to start is the Office of National Drug Control Policy

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(ONDCP) Web site: www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov. For additional information, refer to the Resources section at the end of your playbook.

10. **Develop meaningful relationships with the young people you coach.** The most common reason young people give for not wanting to use drugs is a desire to please the caring adults in their lives. Be a caring adult—someone your athletes can count on for support and guidance.

EFFECTS OF USING DRUGS

Key Play #3 advises you to be sure that your players are aware of the risks of drug use. A simple description of the effects of using drugs is often more effective than a long lecture filled with drug horror stories. Using short, to-the-point descriptions of the negative effects of drugs—such as those listed below—will work well in capturing your students' attention and keeping them engaged.

"As a professional athlete, it is important to maintain a body that is healthy and physically fit. By maintaining a drug-free lifestyle, I am able to keep my mind sharp, uphold a winning attitude, and put forth my best performance—both on and off the field. I hope to communicate a positive message to young people by setting a drug-free example, as well as encourage them to do the same in their own schools and communities."

Dante Washington
Forward—Dallas Burn
Former U.S. Olympic Team Member

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PERFORMANCE IN MANY AREAS IS HAMPERED

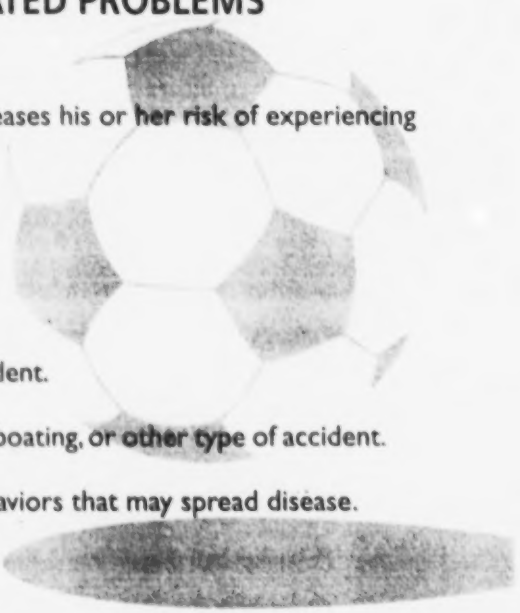
Drugs can have lasting effects on the brain and body. Using drugs often compromises judgment and physical abilities and makes a person unable to perform in a variety of contexts:

- Academics.
- Athletics.
- Music or dramatic arts.
- Decisionmaking in everyday situations.
- Driving any kind of vehicle.
- Operating equipment or tools.

Drug use also diminishes health, physical appearance, and motivation. It impairs judgment, leading to risky decisions and behaviors, and it directly reduces physical and intellectual performance in many areas.

THE RISK OF DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS IS INCREASED

A young adult who uses drugs increases his or her risk of experiencing any (or all) of the following:



- Legal problems.
- Addiction.
- Involvement in a traffic accident.
- Involvement in a swimming, boating, or other type of accident.
- Engaging in risky sexual behaviors that may spread disease.
- Athletic injuries.

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DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS IS IMPAIRED

An adolescent's drug use will also mask problems and interfere with the normal development of such important life skills as:

- Stress management.
- Conflict resolution.
- Problem solving.
- Goal setting.

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL, AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IS DAMAGED

A young person's sense of independence, responsibility, and purpose is best achieved without the interference of drugs. The following types of development depend on a young person remaining drug free:

- Normal psychological development.
- Appropriate moral and spiritual development.
- Ability to solve daily problems and cope with stress.
- Ability to interact and get along with others.

THE GAME WILL BE AFFECTED

Sports were designed to be a fun and competitive way to gain exercise. They were not designed to include drug use. Communicate the serious effect of drugs on the game by asking your players to guess how their foul shots, field goals, or home runs would be affected by drugs. To put it simply, they won't happen. Scientific studies show that drugs impair coordination and abilities. How does this translate on the athletic field?

- A basketball player using drugs is more likely to miss a game-winning free throw.

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- A football receiver using marijuana is less likely to outrun a defender. Speed, lung capacity, muscle strength, and stamina all can drop with marijuana use.
- A skier using drugs likewise dramatically increases his or her chances of suffering a career-ending injury.

If a player's performance is weak because of drug use, the player will have to live knowing that he or she has disappointed the team, the coach, and others—all for a few minutes of a false high.

TEAM SPIRIT WILL SUFFER

Drugs negatively affect not only a team's performance, but its sense of team spirit and cohesiveness as well. In particular, drug use can cause the following effects on the morale of the team:

- Lack of togetherness.
- Lack of concentration.
- Lack of commitment.
- Lack of energy.
- Lack of trust.

"America's coaches need to let kids know it's critical to stay drug free for many reasons. Two big reasons are that drugs can damage your health and it's cheating if athletes use drugs to assist their performance. Olympic athletes know that taking drugs violates the competitive spirit of the Games, is irresponsible toward your own health, and is not fair play."

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley
1984 Olympic Gold Medalist, Women's 100-Meter Hurdles
Director of Training Centers, U.S.Olympic Committee
President—Women's Sports Foundation

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PLEDGE TO BEAT DRUGS

Coaches and athletes all across the country can make a written commitment to take steps that will throw drugs and alcohol for a loss. The pledges below can be copied, modified, or used as samples to fit the needs of your team and school. Think creatively about how best to use these pledges. Signed pledges could be displayed in your school's main office or library. Teams and organizations could require the pledge as a precondition to playing or managing a sport. Neighboring schools might conduct a contest to see which could secure the greatest number of signed student, coach, or even parent, pledges. Talk to school administrators, parents, and community officials about how to monitor adherence to pledges and what consequences should result if players or coaches break their pledges. Generate interest in the pledges by placing an article in your school newspaper or PTA newsletter.

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STUDENT'S PLEDGE

As an athlete, I agree to abide by all rules regarding the use of drugs. I understand that drug addiction is a disease and, even though it may be treatable, it has serious physical and emotional effects—effects that would hurt me, my family, my team, and my school. Given the serious dangers of drug use, I accept and pledge to follow all rules and laws established by my school, team, and community regarding the use of drugs. These include the rules listed in my school's student and athletic handbooks and any other rules established by my coach.

To demonstrate my support, I pledge to:

1. Support my fellow students by setting an example and abstaining from the use of illegal drugs.
2. Avoid enabling any of my fellow students or teammates who use these substances. I will not cover up or lie for them if any rules are broken. I will hold my fellow students and teammates fully responsible and accountable for their actions.
3. Seek information and assistance in dealing with my own or other students' problems relating to drugs.
4. Be honest and open with my parents or guardians about my feelings and problems.
5. Be honest and open with my coach and other school or community personnel.

Student _____

School Name _____

Date _____

** *PARENTS OR GUARDIANS: We ask that you co-sign this pledge to show your support.*

Parent or Guardian _____

Date _____

Parent or Guardian _____

Date _____

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COACH'S PLEDGE

As a coach, I agree to abide by the training rules regarding the use of drugs and to support and enforce all training rules. Given the serious dangers of drug use, I pledge to assist my team members in playing and staying drug free.

To demonstrate my support, I pledge to:

1. Discuss thoroughly with my team the impact of drug use on athletes.
2. Ensure that my athletes understand their commitment to training rules and the consequences of violating any of those rules.
3. Encourage my players and their parents to sign the Student's Pledge and submit their pledges to the athletic director, who will have received a copy of my pledge.
4. Enforce rules consistently when I learn that training rules have been or are likely to be broken.
5. Avoid enabling athletes' drug use or other unhealthy habits by ignoring or refusing to deal with a player who has broken the rules.
6. Provide information and referrals to any student experiencing difficulty with or having concerns about the use of drugs.
7. Provide assistance to students who are re-entering school or rejoining my team after receiving treatment for drug or alcohol use.

Coach _____

School Name _____

Date _____

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RESOURCES

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
810 Seventh Street NW.
Washington, DC 20531
202–307–5911
Internet: www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm

OJJDP provides Federal leadership on juvenile justice and delinquency prevention efforts, which include alcohol and other substance abuse. OJJDP also sponsors the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, which offers easy access to information on all topics relating to delinquency prevention and juvenile justice. The Clearinghouse can be reached at 800–638–8736.

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20503
202–395–6700
Internet: www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/ or www.ondcpsports.org

ONDCP's Athletic Initiative provides coaches, parents, and young people with information about prevention programs focusing on sports. ONDCP also supports the Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse, a single source of statistics, data, research, and referrals useful for developing or implementing drug policy. The Clearinghouse can be reached at 800–666–3332.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)
Division of Community Education
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockwall II, Suite 800
Rockville, MD 20857
301–443–0373
Internet: www.samhsa.gov/csap/index.htm

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) sponsors the National Clearinghouse for Drug and Alcohol Information (NCADI), one of the Federal Government's central clearinghouses for alcohol and drug information. NCADI can be reached at 800–729–6686, TDD 800–487–4889, or online at www.health.org.

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Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
Prevention Branch
700 Army Navy Drive
Arlington, VA 22202
202–307–7936
Internet: www.usdoj.gov/dea/

DEA's Prevention Branch plays a leading role in developing antidrug training programs and materials for the athletic community, such as Team Up: A Drug Prevention Manual for High School Athletic Coaches, which was developed in conjunction with the National High School Athletic Coaches Association and provides coaches with information necessary to develop a prevention program for their teams, classes, and schools.

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes
8709 Leeds Road
Kansas City, MO 64129
816–921–0909
Internet: www.gospelcom.net/fca/

The Fellowship's "One Way to Play" (OW2P!) offers young people a comprehensive program aimed at positive opportunities and drug-free lifestyles.

Join Together
441 Stuart Street
Boston, MA 02166
617–437–1500
Internet: www.jointogether.org/

Join Together is a national resource center and meeting place for communities working to reduce substance abuse and gun violence.

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National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
11724 NW Plaza Circle
Kansas City, MO 64153
816–464–5400, ext. 3263
Internet: www.nfhs.org/

NFHS serves over 10 million young people who participate in school activities. NFHS, with the American Sports Education Program, has developed the National Federation Interscholastic Coaches Education Program (NFICEP). Specific examples include:

- NFICEP's Drugs and Sports Course provides coaches with training in preventing the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Coaches Guide to Drugs and Sports is one of the foremost guides for coaches about drug use and prevention.

National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA)
P.O. Box 2569
Gig Harbor, WA 98335
253–853–6777
Internet: www.hscoaches.org

NHSACA provides training seminars for coaches in drug prevention and counseling.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
Division of Epidemiology and Prevention Research
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 9A–53
Rockville, MD 20857
301–443–1514
301–443–6504
Internet: www.nida.nih.gov/

NIDA's mission is to apply the science of public health epidemiology and to describe the nature and extent of drug abuse, the disease of addiction, and related consequences.

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National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
Division of Clinical and Prevention Research
Prevention Research Branch
6000 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20892
301–443–1677
Internet: silk.nig.gov/niaaa1/grants/dcpr_ph.htm

NIAAA's Division of Clinical and Prevention Research (DCPR) has as its primary objective the fostering of state-of-the-art research in the treatment and prevention of alcohol abuse and alcoholism.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202–0498
800–624–0100
Internet: www.ed.gov/offices/OSES/

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program is the Federal Government's primary vehicle for reducing drug use and violence, through education and prevention activities in our Nation's schools.

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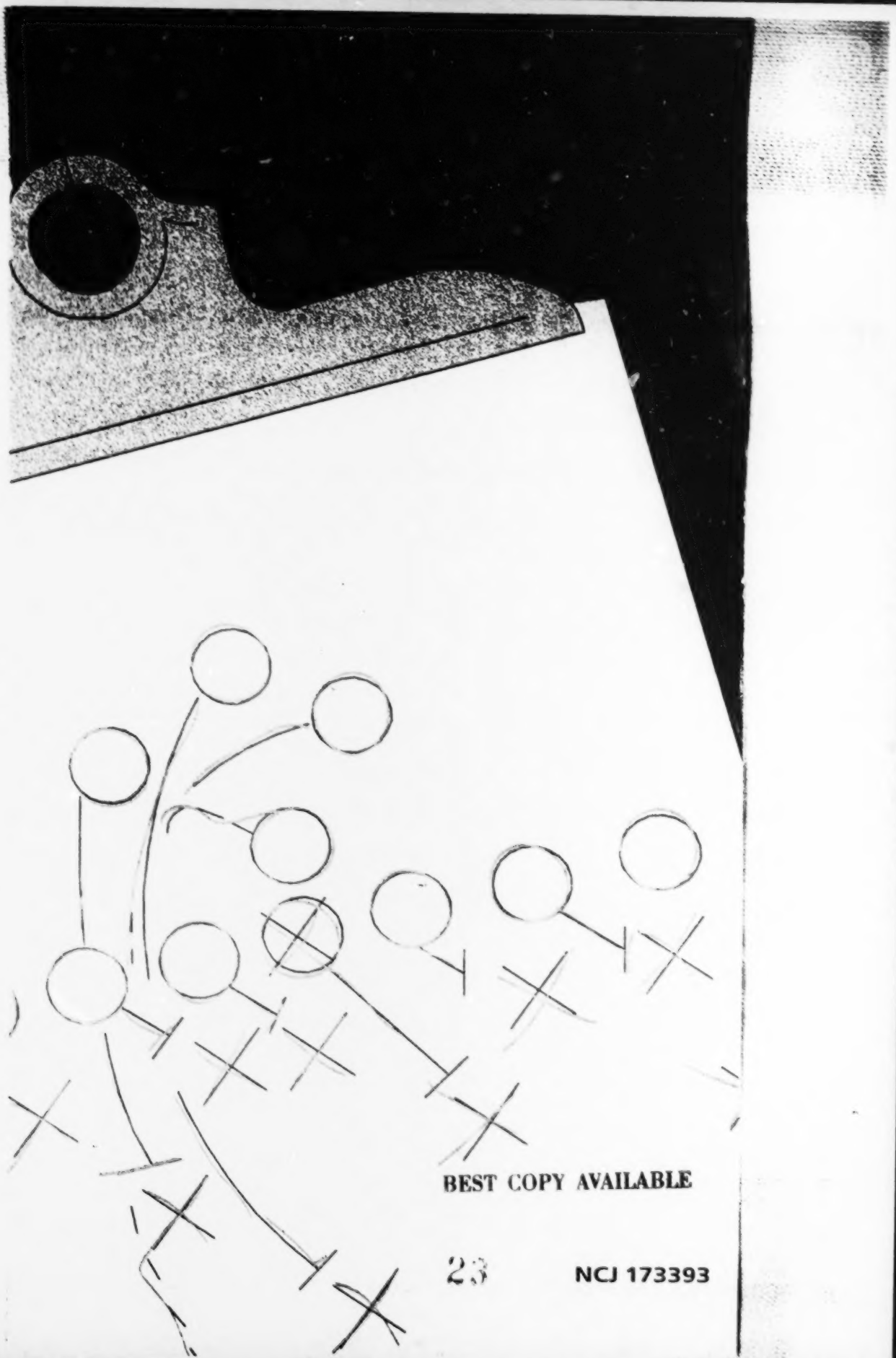

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